



# **YOUNG LEGISLATOR'S PROGRAM**

## **Overview of Program**

The Young Legislators program was inspired by Assemblymember Tony Mendoza's desire to enrich the lives of young people by empowering them with the tools necessary to make a difference in their communities. Through innovative leadership activities, participation in community-wide events and seminars on the legislative process, his ultimate goal is to make them "leaders of tomorrow."

The program was created in 2007 and is the first of its kind in the California State Assembly. Eight high schools from around the district are represented in the current 2008-2009 class, and 50 students have been selected to serve as Young Legislators. The Young Legislators Program was designed to mirror California's State Assembly. The framework for this exceptional program was the brainchild of former State Senator Richard Alarcón. The success of Senator Alarcón Young Senator Program inspired the creation of the current Assembly program. Needless to say, without the Senator Alarcón's original plan, we would have never would had an inspirational launch pad in which to develop the current program.

The program is divided into two parts: the legislative process and community service.

The legislative portion of the program enables students to learn about how bills become laws. In one of their sessions, Young Legislators elect their own leaders and are then appointed to committees. They discuss possible ideas for legislation, learn how to draft bills, submit their ideas to committees, and debate and strategize about how to win approval for their bills. In addition, the Young Legislators track actual bills that have been introduced in the State Legislature. All students who complete the 10 month program will travel to Sacramento to hold mock committee meetings and a floor session at the State Capitol. The trip also enables the Young Legislators to meet with other legislators and policymakers.

The community service portion gives Young Legislators hands on experience by requiring that they attend community events hosted by the District Office. The 40 hour commitment will enable Young Legislators to learn about the District's diverse cultures and communities, as well as how to interact with government offices, local businesses, and residents.

This program provides an interactive experience, like no other, providing the Assembly office the opportunity to be involved in the lives of the youth of the community. Lastly, the program achieves to inspire, educate, and above all, activate the youth by participating and investing themselves into their community.